Fewer students with jobs in 2020

Media Release

Released 11/11/2020

Source: Education and Work, Australia, May 2020

The number of people who were working while they were studying fell by 283,000 between May 2019 and May 2020, according to new data released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

The 2020 Survey of Education and Work collected information in the first two weeks of May, when nationwide COVID-19 restrictions were in place.

Between May 2019 and May 2020, the proportion of students aged 15-64 who were employed fell from 59 per cent to 50 per cent.

ABS Director of Education and Training Statistics, Steven Nicholas, said this reflected a general drop in engagement in work and/or study between May 2019 and May 2020, with full-time engagement dropping from 66 per cent of people aged 15-64 in May 2019 to 63 per cent in May 2020.

“The decrease was mainly due to a fall in people working full-time, from 51 per cent to 49 per cent," said Mr Nicholas. "Due to fewer international students there was also an overall decrease in people studying for a Certificate III or above. This was particularly noticeable for 20-24-year-olds (41 per cent compared with 44 per cent in 2019, a drop of 66,100 students)."

"There was also a fall in apprentices, from 5 per cent of 15-24-year-olds in May 2019, to 4 per cent in May 2020."

Young people were more likely to be not working or studying at all, rising from 11 per cent of people aged 20-24 years in May 2019 to 16 per cent this year.

The survey also showed that 1.4 million people were studying at higher education

institutions and just under half a million (475,000) were studying at technical and further education (TAFE) institutions.

More details on current work and study, as well as information on non-school qualifications, are available in Education and Work, Australia, 2020, available for free download from the ABS website (https://www.abs.gov.au/) .

Media notes

- Engagement in work or study measures levels of participation in employment and education. People can be fully engaged (working full-time, studying full-time, or both working and studying), or partially engaged (part-time work or study).
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